Ecumenical
JR 79
F174

FAITH and UNITY

WINTER, 1961.
Vol. VI No. 2
ONE SHILLING

THE LIBRARY OF THE
FEB 8 1960
UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
NEW YORK CITY

CONTENTS

Editorial		2
Uneasy Thoughts on the Forthcoming Ecumenical Council	Henri Bouchette	4
Free Churchmen and Unity.	John Huxtable	13
An Answer of Peace (Part II)	John Wilkinson	16
The Churches and the Church *Reviewed* by the Bishop of Bristol		21
A Commentary on the Divine Liturgy *Reviewed* by Basil Minchin		23

THE JOURNAL OF
THE CHURCH UNION COMMITTEE
FOR FAITH AND UNITY
IN CO-OPERATION WITH THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON DOCTRINE
OF THE AMERICAN CHURCH UNION AND THE CLERICAL UNION

EDITORIAL

IN his review of Fr Bernard Lèeming's book, *The Churches and the Church*, published in this number of FAITH AND UNITY, the Bishop of Bristol refers to the writer's " immensely wide reading, fortified by personal friendship." Just as the Christian religion concerns the whole man, and his membership in Christ, so too the unity movement is one in which men are drawn together. It is a movement of love, growing from the heart of Christ himself, who prayed that his disciples might be one in the bond of charity. If unity among separated Christians is to be attained there must be love of truth—for Christ is the Truth—and love of men for whom Christ died. The true setting of theological agreement is not the pages of books of reviews, or the *Acta* of Councils, but the body of Christ itself. There is no such thing as a completely detached scholar, able to pursue the truth without being influenced by personality. One is more likely to understand an argument when one knows the man who puts it forward.

The ecumenical movement today suffers from a lack of balance on both sides. There are scholars who are content to discuss the theological positions adopted by separated Christians without ever meeting the people whose ideas they are examining. Such treatment may help to clear the air but a good deal more is needed for real understanding. Protestants frequently complain that Catholic critics do less than justice to Protestant tradition through treating it as a text-book from the past, rather than as a living entity. Fr Wilkinson's examination of a French Protestant tract shows that here too is ground for complaint. Yet personal contacts may be a hindrance to the attainment of unity in truth. Those who have become friends may be reluctant to face or take a firm stand over issues which may divide them. Unresolved problems may be put on one side on the assumption that those who love each other as brothers in Christ must inevitably find a way through all the obstacles to reunion. At times the various Indian schemes for union appear to suffer from this optimism, which is not necessarily the same thing as faith.

Nonetheless, ecumenical discussion cannot but be different once it is brought down to the personal level. Herein lies the importance of the Archbishop of Canterbury's tour which con-

cluded in Rome. Not only did he go in person to the Holy Land and the places most intimately linked with our Lord's life on earth. He met there Christians of other traditions, and was accorded a welcome which must have deeply affected him. Theological differences were not ignored. They were simply put in true perspective against the truth that we are all the children of one Father. In Rome, the Archbishop's approach was one of Christian realism. He spent an hour with Pope John XXIII and those who know the Holy Father cannot think of the audience as being anything but friendly and full of good will. To Cardinal Bea, one of Romes great men, the Archbishop was outspoken, but the Cardinal is good enough and wise enough to prefer the truth when he converses with those who share his quest for truth.

Nor did the Archbishop forget his own people and the separated brethren of the Protestant traditions. They were all welcome to the Anglican church of All Saints, to hear a distinguished address on the subject of unity.

Both fear and facile optimism are out of place as we try to assess the importance of the Archbishop's visit to the Pope. There is no ground for hoping or fearing that we are on the threshold of a *rapprochement* between Canterbury and Rome. The theological positions remain unchanged. On the other hand, the visit may well be the prelude to a change in the atmosphere in which those positions can be discussed. In Rome, we must admit, the personal contact was comparatively easy, once the official world there had recovered from the shock of an Archbishop of Canterbury wishing to see the Pope. Here in England we are rivals, both claiming to be the same thing. The problem is not only theological, but pastoral and emotional. Even so, there is now no valid reason for the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster remaining coldly apart. They do meet, no doubt, on some formal occasions, but there is every reason for multiplying the occasions and bringing them before the public. Anglicans need not fear. The Archbishop of Canterbury will certainly not "sell the pass to Rome." Nor need Roman Catholics fear. No one in Rome has changed his mind about the status and beliefs of the Church of England. All that has happened—all that need happen at this stage—is a recognition of the truth stated by Pope Pius XI, that the broken fragments of the gold-bearing rock are still gold-bearing fragments.

UNEASY THOUGHTS ON THE FORTHCOMING ECUMENICAL COUNCIL*

HENRI BOUCHETTE

Any considerations of the forthcoming Ecumenical Council must start by asking how far the title "Ecumenical" is consistent with the use of the same title for the "generally acknowledged" seven Ecumenical councils. In raising this issue I would emphasize not so much the dogmatic and canonical aspects of the term, but rather that wider aspect of the word ecumenical which involves the bond of charity, and which must unite all Christians and make them responsible for each other. Through baptism we have all been made parts of one body, therefore we must, as members of the one body, continually keep in mind the respect we owe to every other part and work without ceasing and to the full extent of our powers for the reunion of the parts. Because of this bond of charity Church Councils must limit themselves in everything which in any way could hurt fellow Christians or could prevent Reunion or even delay it. Anything in itself possibly desirable but not absolutely necessary, which might hinder reunion, must therefore be left undiscussed because of this bond of ecumenical charity. The Church Council which forgets this is in danger of losing its true ecumenicity.

No doubt Trent had a religious necessity: the attack on catholic spirituality required defence, although Trent probably went further in the wording of its canons than was strictly necessary.

The Vatican Council of 1870 had no such pressing need when it defined certain dogmas. The need of replying to the age-old conciliar question did not exist in 1870.

In the agenda accompanying the summons the infallibility and the primacy of the Pope were not mentioned and therefore the Fathers of the Counicl were not able to prepare themselves beforehand for these questions. The use of Latin as the language

---

*Published originally in the Dutch review St Adelbert April, 1960. The writer is a Roman Catholic.

of the Council certainly prevented thorough discussion, nor were many of the Bishops sufficiently trained in theology and history to be able to give without preparation a balanced judgment on such questions. Approximately 1,000 Roman Catholic prelates were summoned: of these only 774 appeared. The so-called schismatics who were invited did not attend. By the time that the free ballot on these subjects took place 175 Fathers of the Council had left, 88 voted "non placet" and 62 "placet juxta modum;" only 451 voted affirmatively in spite of persistent intrigues. At the final ballot (the Council lasted only six months) 241 Fathers of the Council had already left; they were the Inopportunists and had in reality taken to flight. We must also bear in mind that 276 of the Fathers were Italians. In fact a minority of the Catholic Bishops, acting as a legal majority at the Council, forced upon the Church a solemn definition which at the present moment forms for Christendom the principal and most insuperable obstacle to Reunion. This occurred because the "Ecumenical Council" did not think ecumenically, but uncharitably failed to consider what might give offence to other Christians. Even if this offence were caused by the blindness of such Christians, this blindness should have been treated with charity. To obstruct the road to reunion is so tremendous an evil that such steps can only be taken in the most extreme necessity. That necessity was never proved to exist; rather the impression was created that the Curia was looking for a compensation for the imminent loss of the temporal power of the Pope.

Penitent awareness of the tremendous sin of the brokenness of the Church involves the acknowledgment of the fact that the broken body of Christ has not the same liberty of action as the unbroken body. The questions which such an awareness raises. were completely disregarded.

In addition, the Pre-Reformation Western Church certainly had no right to the illusion that it was separated without guilt from the so-called schismatic part and much less can the Counter-Reformation Church have this illusion. For faith in the Church had been undermined by her own dreadful sins—the Western Schism and the Renascence. The existing state of schism brought the Church into the position of a trustee in the case of suspension of payment: a legal trustee, it is true; but with powers restricted until the business is settled, that is, until the unity of the Church is restored. But the broken Church has denied her brokenness and has proudly continued as an un-broken Church, not interesting herself in her separated children. The various parts of the Church have hurled excommunications at each other, and for the rest of the time have given each other the cold shoulder, flaunting gothicism nowhere showed

mourning for the breach with the East, while the jubilant Jesuit baroque of the Counter-Reformation knows no penitence for the breach of the Reformation causd by piling of sin upon sin.

If the Church, awakened by the shock of the second breach, had stopped all splendour, had, for instance, reduced the liturgical colours to purple in public penitence and had implored the Lord of the Church for forgiveness, then he would have been able to do his work. Instead resort was had to excommunications, secular means of power, burnings, inquisitions, St Bartholomew's Day massacres and religious wars. But the building of St Peter's continued as if nothing had happened on its own foundation: the sale of indulgences, the very cause of the breach. Nobody seemed to think about penitence and the confession of sins.

It is open to question whether one parent of a legally separated family can with those of the children assigned to him, hold a representative family-council. This question occurred to no-one at the Vatican Council for the other members of the family had been forgotten long before. The very fact of the relationship had passed out of mind. On Good Friday alone the heretics and schismatics were coldly and haughtily remembered as misled "through the wiles of the devil"—not through the sins of the Church. The Vatican Council accepted the breaches as a matter of course. It had become customary to regard one's own part of the Church simply as "the Church" and Reunion, together with the conversion of the Jews* had become postponed until the Second Advent of Christ.

Since 1870 the breach has been kept wide open by infallibility and supremacy and also by the mariological dogmas. Humanly speaking these dogmas have closed the road to reunion. It would certainly have been possible to find agreement with the other parts of the Church on the basis of the definition of Trent; on the basis of the Vatican decrees this is infinitely more difficult.

Thus the Vatican Council's lack of charity and lack of real ecumenicity contributed to an apparently unbridgeable alienation. Many in the Reformed Confessions have now become aware of the horror of the brokenness of the Church and long for the way back, but they cannot resist the impression that in 1870 Rome slammed the door definitely and recklessly.

At the Council the Curia and a curial group callously and without necessity forced a solemn pronouncement which must now be paid for heavily. The call for Reunion resounds everywhere. It would have been very difficult for the Confessions

* After age-long persecution and oppression the Jews were still described as "perfidious" in the Good Friday prayers.

influenced by the Reformation to have accepted, against the Tridentine background, many of the things which they once rejected, but it would have been possible. But the step across the Vatican Council will be, humanly speaking, too great. And the mariological dogmas associated with it have caused Mary, who is called the door of heaven, to close the door of the Church for many.

By the declaration of the papal supremacy, the Curia has created for itself a formula for the progressive devaluation in practice of the episcopal office and for centralising the Church in such a way that she does in fact become subject to the Curia. The Roman Catholic Churches in the various parts of the world are in fact governed by the nuncios who, disguised as papal diplomats, hold in reality a position similar to that of the proconsuls of ancient Rome. It is very well known that in practice no bishops are consecrated otherwise than to a Diocese and in order to place these "Roman proconsuls" above the residing bishops recourse is made for the purpose of sacramental equipment to the sad title "in partibus infidelium." Is seems that curial officials, not themselves endowed with charisma of truth, make use of the formula of papal supremacy and, usurping the privileges of the charisma of truth, lord it over the bishops of dioceses.

Can Changes be Expected from the Coming Council ?

The synod of the diocese of Rome which closed recently creates little hope of improvement in the mentality in that city. It does not indicate any difference in the atmosphere there nor any sign of ecumenical charity. Instead of leaving certain questions open for the sake of peace, it was found necessary emphatically to announce that celibacy is the most beautiful pearl of the priest. No attention was paid to the possible combination of marriage and priesthood. This is not a very charitable ecumenical pronouncement for the Catholic, but not Roman, Churches to hear, for they are accustomed to the reality of married priests and deacons.

It seems hardly decent to treat so complex a subject, which in our days is causing such deep concern in the universal church and in Christendom, in such an over-simplified manner at a local synod, while the general Church Council is imminent. There is little sign here of a real ecumenical outlook. This "most beautiful pearl of the priest" may well prove a hindrance to reunion with those Churches which for centuries have been accustomed to married clergy. Perhaps these churches will not wish to exchange the beautiful pearl of a wife in the home for that of a housekeeper in the presbytery. No consideration was

given to the great value of the wife in the English rural parsonage, nor to the important contribution which the minister's family has for centuries brought to the Dutch social community, where a disciplined way of living has produced a splendid number of loyal officials and teachers. Nor was any thought gven as to whether the Reformation would have spread so widely if capable priests, who found celibacy too hard to bear, had not been forced to join the Reformation in order to rid themselves of this burden and had taken their parishes with them in the change-over. Yet the reasons for refusing to accept married men in the priesthood do not seem overwhelming. Would it not be better to leave the decision of marriage or celibacy to the men concerned?

How many priestly vocations stand on this barrier? The courage demanded of the normally erotic man is certainly not so widely available that it will always meet the demand. This is evident in a Church which is more and more developing an outer circle requiring much pastoral care but remarkably unfruitful in vocations. Surely there are at the present time many missionary territories and de-christianised areas, etc., etc., where priests with the celibate vocation could be usefully employed because it is difficult there "to lead about a wife" (1. Cor. 9:5). This would leave the others free to occupy the ordinary parsonage, where the wife could be the true deaconess. All these questions appear prematurely excluded from any conciliar discussions because of the one-sided way of thinking of the so-called Roman synod.

The question of married or unmarried priests is closely connected with the question of the restoration of the Diaconate. Many of these deacons, when once their spiritual need has been fulfilled in the diaconate, will shun its completion in the priesthood if thereby they can avoid the burden of celibacy. This question has also been excluded from discussion by the synodical pronouncement.

Moreover at first glance the synod of Rome shows characteristics which may well be reflected later in the Council. The Bishop of Rome was not meeting his own priests to consider the tremendous pastoral need of his diocese and its measureless irreligiosity. It was no discussion of a father with his mature sons, but rather it was a purely curial affair. The Pontifex Maximus, surrounded by a host of flaunting cardinals and curial prelates, pronounced his speech from the throne. There was apparently no question of a confidential discussion between the bishop and his own priests.

At this point I want to draw attention to the subject of decentralisation, which is of the highest importance. Prof.

Buys, S.J., has recently given us via Vatican Radio some idea of the opinions which appear to exist on this matter within the Curia. He regarded the present situation, which leaves the right of presentation to Chapters, as quite unsatisfactory. He considered that bishops should be made into ordinary curial officials. He held that just as the nuncios have to pass through their term of probation as 3rd, 2nd and 1st class officials and have to prove their ability to their superiors, so the bishops should be similarly organised in rank as, perhaps, senior clerk-departmental manager-, managing director-bishop. He strongly disapproved of the right of presentation by Chapters, which the Church of Rome at the moment quietly evades by appointing bishops-coadjutor where they are not expected. He referred especially to France but concealed the background there. Until the Combes legislation at the beginning of this century, the appointment of bishops was by concordat left in practice to the French government. The Curia itself handed over the right of appointment to the government. Curial interests were often more concerned with the temporal affairs of the Papal States rather than with the spiritual responsibilities of the Apostolic See, and so diplomatic handling was often required. The French Chapters became thereby robbed of all rights, including the right of presentation. Because of the one-sided repeal of the Concordat a deadlock has been caused which still officially exists. Since the repeal the French bishops have been appointed by Rome, as curial officials, not even through the normal channel, the Congregation of the Consistory, but through the Secretariat of State: in practice directly through the Nuntiature. They are appointed without any co-operation of the local Church, as are the missionary bishops. France has become in fact Roman missionary territory as were the Netherlands until 1853. To Prof. Buys this is the ideal situation.

The scant rights of the Chapters which are in fact no more than the right of petition reserved for every citizen in the Dutch Constitution, are still too much in the eyes of Prof. Buys. All this is made known to us on the eve of the Ecumenical Council, and so we see that on this question also, pressure groups are at work to influence the decisions of the forthcoming Council.

At a recent meeting of the Couturier Circle at Haarlem, Prof. Groot gave an extremely subtle Barthian-dialectical discourse about the brokenness of the Church. If I have understood him rightly, this brokenness is to be referred back to our tensions with Christ, which will remain in existence until his coming again.

The relationship between the two is of course evident, but whether the one must of necessity flow into the other, seems to

me to be questionable. The tensions between us and Christ are part of our unfallen human nature. They are not derived from sin, for without these tensions there could have been no Fall. These tensions were found also in our Lord because, though one with the Father, he was also completely human; for he prayed: "Father, if it be possible, let this Cup pass from me."

But must these tensions between us and Christ, which I should like to call vertical, necessarily cause the other tensions, which I would call horizontal, and break the Church?

When, in the high-priestly prayer, Christ prayed for unity, He certainly knew the vertical tensions, yet he did not pray for an Utopia.

It is clear from our Lord's words that the horizontal tensions are by no means an inevitable result of the vertical tensions, and therefore that schism is not unavoidable. If after a schism each part goes its own way and acts simply as if it were the unbroken Church, without any penitence or sense of guilt, restoration of unity is impossible.

The Roman Catholic Church not only adopts such an attitude, but denies the possibility of a broken Church. Others do not deny this in principle but certainly do so in practice. The fact that the Netherlands Reformed Church can even now summon the evil courage to make decisions regarding women in the ministry, shows that they also lack real ecumenical charity. They failed to consider that such questions, involving agelong tradition and grave exegetical problems, cannot be resolved by the unilateral action of so small a part of the Christian unity. Such an isolationist attitude, if generally practised, would make the World Council of Churches a club of theologians and its aim of removing barriers would become a farce. The Netherlands Reformed Church stands convicted of a lack of penitential humility.

In fact people ought to come to the point where they want to stop constructing spectacular Church buildings, because the display of church towers only demonstrates before the world the dissensions of Christendom. The Church ought to be ready to prostrate herself before her Lord and pray for mercy in simple Meeting Houses. The pomp of liturgical glamour ought to be changed to mourning and the Church ought to lay upon herself the interdict which she has so often rashly inflicted upon others. The Church might even come to look upon her duty of missionary work in a new light if she realises that she can offer to the heathen only Christian brokenness and can educate her converts only in schism.

What an impressive witness it would be if the glamorous

St Peter's were closed as a token of mourning and shame. It would be worth much more than all the splendour of the Holy Year.

Only a Council of penitence can bring relief. The Fathers of the Council ought to meet not in their seats but on their knees. Pilgrimages, not crusades, are required. We must pray first for our own conversion, for only he who has been converted himself, can pray for the conversion of others. The prayer of the Abbé Couturier is wholly relevant:

> "O Lord Jesus Christ, Who on the eve of Thy Passion didst pray that all Thy disciples might be completely one as Thou art in the Father and the Father in Thee; grant that we may suffer keenly on account of the infidelity of our disunion; grant us the loyalty to recognise and the courage to reject all our hidden indifferences and mistrust and our mutual hostility."

An ominous hint about the atmosphere of the Council was given when the curtain was drawn recently for the pronouncement of the prologue. Cardinal Tardini, the Pope's secretary of state and as such the Vatican's highest spokesman, was interviewed on French television by the editor of "La Croix." He appears to have declared among other things, that the "Ecumenical Council" is an "internal" matter of "The Church." That in so saying he expressly implied the Roman Catholic part of the Church is clear from the fact that without any ecumenical charity, he brutally called the other parts of the Church "the other religious denominations." He said moreover that it would be a most beautiful display, a grand manifestation of truth, unity and love.

Many of us hoped that the Council would be for the service of Christendom. This hope proves to have been a mirage, which with these words of the Cardinal Secretary of State, passes forever from our sight.

In conclusion I arrive at the following summary statement. Without entering into any discussion of the dogmatic correctness of the definitions made since 1854, we can certainly conclude that they have militated against the movements towards Reunion.

Some might claim that the infallibility of the Church includes the correct timing of all her decisions. But if this is questioned as well it may be—then it is possible to maintain that the sinfulness which in the history of the Church has accompanied her actions so obviously and in so many ways, has also invaded the Councils of the Church. This invasion might well

have caused these Councils to force decisions which, though in themselves legal and therefore correct, should not have been proclaimed at that time in view of the broken condition of the Church. If we accept this statement, then we are bound to face the following questions.

1. Is it not contrary to our Lord's prayer in St Jn. 17:20, 23 to allow the Council which is to deal with questions of ecumenical concern, to be preceded by any other council at which decisions are taken which involve matters of dogmatic theology about which there are deep rooted differences in broken Christendom?

2. Is it well-timed to give so large a measure of power to the Curia through the dogmatic decisions concerning papal supremacy? May this not provoke the danger that through curial appointments to bishoprics curial majorities may be brought into existence? And would not such majorities prevent any effort to break through the curial supremacy?

3. Is it not contrary to ecumenical charity and the spirit of penitence for our brokenness publicly to act and to testify that the "brokenness of Christendom" by no means implies the "brokenness of the Church?" Should we not for this reason and for this reason alone reject the summoning, without dire necessity, of a Council which claims to be "Ecumenical?"

4. Does not 1 Cor. 8:13 teach that it can sometimes be a duty to abstain from what is in itself legitmate to avoid giving offence?

5. Is the proposed "grand display of unity" consistent with penitent awareness of the dreadful sin of brokenness? Surely the Mother Church has a large share of guilt in this sin.

The martyr Ignatius of Antioch, an apostolic father whose epistles are one of the most important sources for the knowledge of ecclesiastical teaching and organisation in the 2nd century, says that the Roman Church has the "presidency in the bond of charity."

I am perturbed about the coming Council, because I am afraid that the Roman Curia is far too little aware of its responsibilities in relation to true ecumenical charity. I am afraid that a Council which lacks this charity will separate rather than unite. Only the greatest charity can find here the path of humility and prudence. It was that charity which caused the Abbé Couturier even in these present days to ask his Protestant brethren forgiveness for the terrors of the Night of St Bartholomew of 1572.

FREE CHURCHMEN AND UNITY

by

JOHN HUXTABLE

In recent years the Free Church Federal Council has made more than one attempt to bring about a United Free Church in England; but these efforts have so far proved abortive, and there seems to be little present hope of much success in the forseeable future.

The most recent such attempt ended so gloomily as to justify this depressing conclusion; and an account of what happened may disclose some of the reasons for the failure. An invitation was sent to each of the leading Free Churches (Baptist, Congregationalist, Methodist, Presbyterian) to take part in conversations designed to prepare the way for a united church. Of these four communions only the Congregationalists said that they were prepared to accept this invitation: the remaining three denominations declined, stating a preference to discuss the theological problems involved in such a union of churches. When an invitation to join in that sort of conversation was sent to the Congregationalists, they declined it on the grounds that sufficient discussion of such issues had already taken place and that at the present juncture to enter upon further conversations without the expressed intention of achieving unity would be trifling with a great matter. The Congregationalists further stated that their attitude to the matter would be changed if these conversations were to include representatives of the Church of England, for in that case there would be justification for conversations of a more preliminary kind.

Among the rank and file of Free Churchmen this exchange caused dismay, except among those who care for none of these things, since Free Church leaders are given to making public declarations about the rightness and the desirability of Christian unity. How comes it, many asked, that when it is brought to an issue, the matter appears to be shelved?

A number of factors must be reckoned; and one of them is that the Methodist Church, for example, is itself engaged in conversations with the Church of England; and Methodists might, therefore, legitimately claim that they had better deal with one such matter at a time. To some extent, moreover, the Presbyterians were in a similar position. At least two Free Churches could properly say that the timing of the invitation was inopportune.

It must be admitted, too, that the several Free Churches, no less than other corporate bodies, develop a remarkable inertia when any major change is mooted. Ecclesiastical as well as civil bureaucracies have a vested interest in preserving the *status quo*, so much so that it needs a much greater head of popular enthusiasm than is at present evident to get the matter "actively considered."

There are, moreover, a considerable number of influentiai Free Churchmen who are not persuaded that "One Free Church" is the right objective for those who long for Christian unity to have in view. Their argument seems to run along two rather different lines. On the one hand, it is said that such a united Free Church as was mooted might in the end prove a stumbling-block rather than a stepping-stone to further unity. Such a body would take a good while to "settle down" and would gradually develop its own self-consciousness: might this not put off still further reunion with the Anglican Church? On the other hand, it is argued that Free Church unity is in itself too limited an objective in any case. For longer than can be remembered these communions have had inter-communion with one another. Congregationalist ministers, for example, may (and frequently do) preach in other Free Churches, and administer the Holy Communion; and such inter-availability operates, so to say, all round. What, it may be asked, do we really gain by getting these Free Churches together except a larger and possibly more bureaucratic organization?

There are two factors which add a good deal of force to this second line of argument. For one thing, a remarkably large number of Free Church people have no very strong denominational convictions: they are simply "Free Church." When they live in one area they belong to the local Congregational Church for what seems good and sufficient reasons; but when fresh work or retirement take them to another district, they may easily attach themselves to a Baptist or Methodist Church without any qualm of conscience, usually on the ground that the congregation of their choice is "alive," though sometimes but less commonly the reason given is that the minister is a better preacher! Methodists on the whole are more denominationally self-conscious and more likely to remain Methodists all their lives; but in many a Congregational Church there are numbers of ex-Methodists—and for the matter of that, ex-Anglicans as well! This may well be taken as evidence of quite deplorable muddleheadedness and lack of conviction; but, if we are to understand one another, we have to be honest. This readiness to move from one communion to another does at least prove that for many Free Churchmen our present denominational barriers are relatively meaningless. They are more interested in what they take to be the heart of the

matter than in denominational loyalty. However it be evaluated, this appears to be a fact of considerable importance, the more so since some Free Church leaders are apt to say that in recent years the lines between the various Free Church communions have been more sharply drawn!

Another misgiving which a number of Free Churchmen feel about "one Free Church" is that it would necessarily be very big. There is no evidence that churches are well able to resist the present trend towards centralization and bureaucracy; and there are some who, with what justification no non-Methodist can tell, would claim that the gains of the now thirty-year-old Methodist Union were somewhat offset by increased centralization. That it was and is right for the Methodist Churches to become one, few would question; but could it have happened in such a way that the local chapels had less sense of being lost in something so big as to be inevitably rather impersonal? Could synods on a county basis have a greater part in the life of the Church? These, at any rate, are the sort of questions which some serious enthusiasts for Christian unity raise; and sometimes they look with envy at the diocesan system in the Church of England, which provides a local focus for loyalty, and thus makes more vivid the sense of belonging to a great company. Whatever may be the value of these two illustrations from Anglicanism and Methodism, the point at issue is of vital moment: how can a big united church cope with the problem of its bigness? How can the member of the local chapel be prevented from feeling that he is lost in a great ecclesiastical machine?

In presenting these reasons why there are some misgivings in the minds of a good many Free Churchmen about Free Church unity, I have indicated at least a few of the reasons why the question of reunion with the Church of England is frequently discussed. There appears to be a growing conviction that any attempt at a truer expression of our unity in Christ which did not include the Church of England would be scarcely worth the effort. This mood does not arise from any light-hearted disregard of the problems involved: what has recently happened as between the Churches of England and Scotland has not passed unnoticed! Nevertheless, in a great many quarters it is more and more clearly realised that the real problems of Christian unity lie in the relation between the episcopal and the non-episcopal understandings of the nature and structure of the Church. Not that it is any longer supposed that merely by examining the issue of ministerial orders we shall advance towards unity, but that it is widely recognized that these two points of view concerning the ministry symbolize two ways of understanding the Christian Church, which, while they can each

be made to look whole, are not in fact really separable. The non-episcopalian cannot say to the episcopalian, "We do not belong together;" and we trust that the episcopalian no longer wishes to disown the non-episcopalian. As far as the British scene is concerned, this surely is the next great task for those who believe in Christian unity; and the very fact that it presents such well-known and formidable obstacles, makes it the more attractive to those who perceive that to reunite, if that is really the word, the Free Churches present problems too small to engage the enthusiasm of many.

How much do we desire to obey our Lord's will for his Church that it should be one? How much do we lay ourselves open to discover what that unity may be? How many do we hope, desire, intend to exclude from consideration? How far are we ready to subject our traditions to the judgment of the will of Christ, to admit that "our tradition" is partial and therefore needs what others have perceived of the Lord's purpose? None of us can avoid these questions and remain an honest man. As we seek to face them in our continuing separation and in such greater fellowship as is at present possible, may God's Spirit show us the way to such unity as is the divine purpose for the Church, and may he give us courage to live by what he shows

AN ANSWER OF PEACE

(Continued)

by JOHN WILKINSON

Certainly the result of Roman legislation and teaching about the Blessed Virgin Mary has gone further than it should. We have only to think of the dangerous parallels so often to be seen in which she is given honours deceptively similar to those accorded to her Son. How many churches have a statue of the Sacred Heart on one side, balanced by a statue of the Virgin on the other? What are we to make of the Roman Calendar which contains a lists of feasts of our Lady which correspond only too closely with the feasts allotted to our Lord.

If such practices tend to being *suggestio falsi*, we find what amounts almost to a *suppressio veri* in the terms in which the mode of honouring our Lady are described. It is of very little help to the ordinary layman to be told that he must distinguish between latria and hyperdulia in the cult of the Blessed Virgin. We need not, perhaps, be too hard on the exaggerated titles

which occur in hymns of our Lady, but above all we should try to avoid ambiguity, for it is the ambiguity of such phrases as that of the Lourdes inscription which can be dangerously misleading. The Roman Church has failed to teach her faithful their devotion to the Blessed Virgin in terms clear enough to save it from the danger of exaggeration.

The tract continues :—

> Similarly it is to glorify the creature, and the necessity of the clergy as mediators, that Rome so cruelly condemns all her priests to *celibacy*, and exalts the *monastic life*, of which the Bible offers us not a single example.
>
> *Idolatry*, in whatever shape it appears, is as hateful in the eyes of God as it is fatal to the soul of man, whom God made to worship him and *him alone*.

* * * *

> As for the Papacy, it is founded on a lie, *the so-called Papacy of the apostle Peter*, which is no more than a legend, invented by the popes themselves to justify their unlawful and deadly supremacy. *There is no trace of this doctrine in the New Testament.* When the Lord said to Peter, "I will build my Church" (Matthew 16, 18), he thereby stated that it is he who builds the Church—that the Church is his and his alone. Peter is no more than the first stone used for this marvellous edifice, which God by his Spirit builds up through the ages. When he writes to the Christians in Rome, the apostle Paul does not even mention Peter; and Peter himself in his epistles presents himself as no more than an "Apostle, a servant of Jesus Christ," or again as "an elder." He says, "The elders among you I exhort, who am a *fellow-elder*, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ" (I Peter 5, 1).

This series of arguments, though we may agree with their results, will unfortunately make no deeper impression on Rome today than when they were first mustered up by Wyclif. They will reply, "Of course : we all know what it says in the Bible. But you will find the beginnings of all these doctrines there if you only look : St Paul exhorts us to virginity, St Peter is made head of the Apostles. The reason that you do not understand these teachings is that you are outside the Church which has the authority to interpret the Scriptures : for we, by the Holy Spirit have been led to a fuller appreciation of the Bible." This is the shape of the argument which Protestants have to oppose—that is if they seek to argue, and not merely to repeat the battle-cries of armies routed long ago.

But the Romans are not merely fools, they are knaves :—

As we see it today, the papacy is more dangerous than ever. In his recent call to Unity, John XXIII seeks to entice into his power the souls which are still free from it. We see the leaders of the "*Eucumenical Movement*" openly congratulating themselves on this treacherous invitation, and "recognising the capital importance of the decision taken by the Supreme Pontiff." These blind guides do not care to see that the unity proclaimed by the Pope is a *Unity to his own advantage, a Roman Unity*, as Pius XI described it when he wrote, on 6 January 1928 in the Encyclical "Mortalium Animos": "The only right approach to the reunion of Christendom is to encourage those who have fallen away to return to the One Church of Christ."

It is sadly true that there are many Catholics who think of Unity only in terms of a return to Rome: it is sadly true that there are some Protestants who can see no Christian duty to work for Unity at all. But, so far as the Ecumenical Movement is concerned, surely all its members would, in their various ways, accept the definition of Pius XI — "a return to the one Church of Christ," though Christ alone knows when and how this may be possible. The writers of the tract are here so partial in their criticism that they fail to appreciate the advances which have in fact been made by the Church of Rome in the understanding of Church Unity between 1928 and 1959.

John XXIII like all his predecessors presents himself as the infallible head of the Universal Church, Christ on earth, and seeks to reign over the world as if it belonged to him. But there are still *millions of* TRUE PROTESTANTS in the world, who, obedient to the Holy Scriptures, are brave enough to make a stand, in full knowledge of the dangers, against the blasphemous and extravagant claims as much of the Roman Vatican as of that other Vatican, into which we see the World Council of Churches transforming itself: with renewed love and worship they announce for all to hear that Jesus Christ, and he alone, is Lord and Saviour, the only rightful King of all mankind.

The tract ends with a note that copies will be sent free on request, and with an advertisement for "*Cri d'Alarme*," the U.D.P. bulletin. Let us, now we have finished reading it, consider its merits and defects.

Protestants and anyone else have a perfect right to criticise the Roman Church. Indeed so far as we feel it a part of our duty to show the world the true way to Christ on earth and in heaven, we are bound to criticise all Christian bodies whom we know to present false teachings: and every priest promises

to do this at his ordination. But, whether we find it comforting or not, the duty of a Christian has now been extended by an extension of awareness; for our new realisation of the scandal of a divided Church makes it urgent for us to understand better the Christians who belong to other Churches, and to learn to love them. So when we criticise our separated Christian brothers, on whom Baptism has printed the image of Christ, we must allow ourselves to do so only in ways which are compatible with understanding and love. It is easy to fulminate against Romans in the safety of our study, and easy to acquire within a congregation or small circle of friends the habit of speaking of them contemptuously. We have today to do something more difficult, to seek an answer of peace.

So we find that the tract of the U.D.P. fails not because all that it says is untrue, but because it is neither appreciative nor constructive. If we are trying to love someone, we do not dismiss his views in acid epigrams: if we disagree with him, as frequently we may, we must offer him reasons which are truly reasonable, and not merely abusive.

The reasons we offer must, moreover, be based on a positive understanding both of our own position and of that of our opponent. For to disagree with someone in charity is to treat him as an equal—someone who is as sincere as we are in his desire for the joy of being with God, and as sincere in his faithfulness and love for his Church. We may disagree with some of his beliefs, but we must never dismiss them without considering what positive values they express: and we may disagree with his reasons for belief, but, again so far as they are positive and coherent, we must respect them. Such an attitude demands preparation, for we can only present our own position and appreciate the sacred beliefs of others if we present both theirs and ours with the greatest possible accuracy. For our arguments must not be undertaken with the desire to obtain agreement at all costs. Agreement will very often be possible, so long as we are prepared to keep an open mind, and to accept evidence at its true value: but we must be firm in our refusal to compromise the truth as we truly see it, for the reunion of Christ's Church can never be built on the foundation of compromises and half-truths.

The tract also shows how easy it is to assume that we know more about Roman doctrines than we do. When we argue about phrases like "the Sacrifice of the Mass," or "the doctrine of Purgatory," we are apt to assume that these things are all infallibly defined according to our understanding of them by the infallible authority of the Church of Rome. Only careful study can reveal to us the sense, or senses, in which these doctrines are binding upon those of the Roman obedience.

In fact there is very often considerable difficulty in finding what it is that Rome teaches. This is simple enough to discover in theory: but which answer are we to accept? Is it what the theologians tell us? Do we examine the practices of popular piety? Do we go to Rome, or France, or Mexico? To a Franciscan, a Dominican, a Jesuit? And when we arrive at the answer, is it fixed or changeable? For even if the answer comes in a fixed form of words, we must still ask in how many different ways it may properly be interpreted.

An Anglican sees a great many differences between the teaching of his own Church and the Roman system. The fundamental difference is, of course, over the belief in the supremacy of the Pope in matters of doctrine and jurisdiction: but the differences go deeper, and if we wish to criticise individual points, we must make the effort to see them as part of a system. It is obviously useless to take points of Roman doctrine and show how meaningless they are in the context of French Protestant thought, or in high Anglicanism. If we are to prepare an answer of peace, we must be ready to weigh their importance in their own system, and offer our critique in a manner which Romans themselves can appreciate. So, if we wish to criticise the place of the clergy in the Roman Church, it would be a mistake to begin by the assertion that they have made themselves into a kind of demi-gods, for as soon as we have uttered such an opinion, the only people who will continue to listen to us are those who already agree. But it might be more useful if we suggested that the Roman clergy have grown too professionalised, and are thus losing contact with their people, for this is something to which Romans might agree. Or of the doctrine of Purgatory it would be a waste of time to say that it cannot be true because it "makes fruitless the death of the King of Heaven," even if we believe this to be true: such a statement cannot help a Roman to see the error of his ways, for he is committed by his holy faith to a belief in Purgatory. But we might do some good, and reach a better understanding, if we suggested that in the form usually taught, the Roman doctrine of Purgatory can be dangerously misleading. There are some positions to which those with whom we disagree are committed by their obedience: to contradict or abuse these is an insult to their intelligence and a barrier to love. But this does not mean that we must be silent about our disagreement, or conceal it, or compromise with what we believe to be the truth. Only let us question them with humility, for we are speaking of the things of God.

The Protestants were using the kind of arguments we have seen in the tract four hundred years ago, and the Roman counter-arguments were every bit as bad. Fifty years ago the

position was generally only a little better. But in the last fifty years the increasing prayers and studies of Christians in all denominations have shown us the possibility of a more excellent way. It remains for us to continue this work, and to learn how, after the example of Christ, we may together discover the answer of peace.

THE CHURCHES AND THE CHURCH

by FATHER BERNARD LEEMING, S.J.

Darton, Longman and Todd 35/- (xi + 340 pp.)
Reviewed by the Bishop of Bristol.

It would be a poor compliment to this book to say that its chief interest is that it should have been written at all! Nevertheless there would be some truth in the remark for it is the first full-scale study of the ecumenical movement by an English Roman Catholic. We have long been familiar with exhaustive writings by French, Dutch and German Roman Catholics, and indeed the most serious studies of the ecumenical movement have been written by members of the largest Church which is not a member of the World Council of Churches. Among the more recent students of the ecumenical movement is Father Bernard Leeming, whose articles in the newly established *Heythrop* Journal continue the careful study amongst Jesuits which has since the Edinburgh Conference of 1937, previously been associated with the name of Father Maurice Bévenot of the same Society.

The book begins with an historical survey of the ecumenical movement, including the formation of the World Council of Churches and the organisations largely behind it, and a description of the growth of the Church of South India. The second chapter, "The rise of the impulse to Unity" analyses the movements of thought which have brought about the modern ecumenical movement: he stresses the awareness of the evils of division, the challenge to Christians facing a non-Christian world in their divided state, the influence of Biblical and Patristic studies and the great growth in prayer for the healing of divisions.

There follows an interesting chapter analysing development

in ecumenical thought. He lists (page 60 ff) a number of fixed points of agreement, and describes the attention which has been given for some yearsin Faith and Order to the "non-theological factors" influencing division.

Then comes a chapter entitled "Ecumenical Strains and Stresses." For one who writes, technically speaking, from outside the ecumenical movement it is written with amazing insight. Whilst the book was in the printers' hands Father Leeming spent a solid month at the meetings of the World Council of Churches in St. Andrews. It is testimony to his perspicacity that I think he found nothing there which made him want to alter what he had sent to the printer.

He sympathetically understands the difficulties which are encountered by Christians who meet each other without the kind of common language which Roman Catholics have in Latin, or the common frame of reference which they have in Thomism. A variety of Christian traditions, from an even wider variety of national and cultural backgrounds naturally face initial difficulties in mutual understanding which must seem strange to those whose international Christian backgrounds has always lain within the comparative unity of world-wide Roman Catholicism.

There then follow two chapters on the attitude of ecumenists towards Rome, and the attitude of Rome towards Ecumenism. On the latter he justly notes—

> "The first difficulty is that both the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches are large and international bodies, and adequate judgement about their attitudes can scarcely be formed exclusively on a basis of the official pronouncements made by either. The Catholic Church, for instance, has declined any official participation in the World Council and its proceedings; but has taken formal cognizance of the movement, has issued instructions to Catholics about the right principles to follow, and has given marked signs of approval to the Roman Unitas Association, which tries to combine fraternal affection with evangelical candour. Individual Catholics, while accepting most loyally the instructions from Rome, lay different emphasis upon different aspects of the matter, and show a feeling varying from the distinctly warm to the distinctly cold."

He finds a difficulty which is not peculiar to Roman Catholics in analysing the theological assumptions of the World Council. He quotes extensively from the important statement of the World Council of Churches Central Committee at Toronto in 1950, and the report of the Commission on the Church in 1951, preparing for the Lund Conference. His criticism of these

assumptions is a salutary exercise for those who assume that they share them.

The final chapter is written primarily for the fellow members of his own Communion on "Catholic Principles relative to Ecumenism," and although no one would expect them to contain any modification of the well-known Roman Catholic principles regarding other Christians, they are written both with unusual knowledge and with a charity which is happily becoming less unusual. And the Epilogue is his own final confession of faith in the positive value of all sincere desire for unity, concluding—

> "A corrective for possible wrong perspectives is to turn our eyes and hearts towards the millions and millions of men for whom Christ died, whom Christ now loves, with whom Christ suffers, yet who do not know him and love him. Is it in any way due to us that they do not know or love him?"

Thirteen pages of bibliography give some indication of the immensely wide reading, fortified by personal friendship, upon which this exceptionally well-informed book is based. It is one for which we can only hope that there will be a wide field of interest in the Roman Catholic Church itself. But no less the book will be an invaluable work of reference for all those who take the Unity movement seriously.

★ ★ ★ ★

A COMMENTARY ON THE DIVINE LITURGY by Nicholas Cabasilas. (S.P.C.K., 120 pp., 18/6.) Reviewed by Basil Minchin.

In the middle of the fourteenth century there was a group of young men who were much affected by the "new" ideas of the rennaissance movement that was developing in Italy. They studied classical authors with enthusiasm and were attracted by the humanist ideas of this movement. Demetrius Cydones, one of the group, decided eventually that western scholasticism was the modern equivalent in his time of the best classical philosophy. He became a Roman Catholic and translated the *Summa* into Greek. Another of the group, Nicholas Cabasilas, not only remained Orthodox, but became a supporter of that most 'Orthodox' of saints, St Gregory Palamas. He wrote two major works *Life in Jesus Christ* which was an attempt to deal with the whole of life in the Church, and the present work which is now made available in English for the first time.

As one would expect from the background sketched above, Cabasilas fluctuates between accepting the ideas of western mediaeval theology and defending his Church against the implications of his friend Cydones' action. The work is what

we should now call a devotional commentary on the Eucharistic Liturgy of the Orthodox Church with theological digressions, two of them extensive, which tend to be anti-Roman polemics whilst accepting a basically western approach. The devotional commentary is useful to students as giving some information about the precise Liturgy in use in 14th century Greece, and also indicating the use made of devotional practices like kneeling. The theology is interesting in seeing what western ideas had become accepted in the Greece of the time, and also on what grounds the westerns were then attacking the Greeks, but it is of little value outside a period study. It does not, for instance, help a westerner to get behind the reformation misunderstandings about the Eucharist, nor illuminate the tension between Catholic and Protestant Eucharistic theology. It is a somewhat artificial attempt to describe and justify Orthodox practice using the language, and even the limited ideas of things like sacrifice, which were current in the west in the fourteenth century.

The translation reads smoothly and the work is accompanied by a historical foreword and commentary on the action of the eastern Liturgy. But the foreword tells the reader very little of the real background necessary to understand the work. That it is published with a very competent though elementary description of the Orthodox Rite by Fr R. M. French suggests that this is a basic work by which westerners can be led to understand the spirit of the Orthodox Liturgy. In fact the work has had a wide influence, not least on the Council of Trent, because the writer had swallowed so much of the western presuppositions and then on that basis proceeded to justify eastern practice. One is grateful for the book as a somewhat specialist study, but hopes that it will not be mistaken for a norm of Orthodoxy.

Communications for the Editor and **Annual Subscriptions** to *Faith and Unity*, which may begin at any time (minimum subscription, post free five shilings a year), should be sent to the Publications Secretary, Faith and Unity, 6 Hyde Park Gate, London, S.W.7.

FOUNDRY PRESS LTD., BEDFORD